

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 EURE-00 PM-07 NSC-10

SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

DODE-00 PRS-01 FEA-02 EB-11 COME-00 INT-08 OMB-01

TRSE-00 L-03 AID-20 IGA-02 MC-02 DPW-01 DRC-01 /183 W

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P R 281825Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6409

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T PARIS 2429

BEIRUT PASS DAMASCUS AND BAGHDAD, STATE ALSO FOR T/IEP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENGR PFOR FR XF

SUBJECT: FRENCH AIMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

1. SUMMARY. IN CONVERSATION JANUARY 28 WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR, RENE DABERNAT, WELL-INFORMED DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT WITH FREQUENT ACCESS TO JOBERT, MADE THE FOLLOW POINTS ABOUT FRENCH AIMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT'S CURRENT TRIP THERE. END SUMMARY.

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2. ALLUDING TO FAMILIAR FRENCH VIEWS ON SUPERPOWER CONDOMINIUM,

DABERNAT SAID FRANCE WAS DETERMINED NOT TO ALLOW THE MIDDLE EAST TO BE DOMINATED BY THE US AND USSR AND THAT FRANCE HOPED TO CARVE OUT A PLACE OF SUBSTANTIAL INFLUENCE, BOTH THROUGH UNILATERAL DIPLOMACY AND AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE EC-9. FRANCE'S OBJECTIVES WERE THREEFOLD: (A) TO ASSURE ITSELF A SECURE, LONG-TERM SUPPLY OF OIL AT PREDICTABLE PRICES; (B) TO FURTHER ITS AMBITIONS IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN; AND (C) TO EARN A ROLE FOR FRANCE IN THE MID-EAST SETTLEMENT PROCESS.

3. JOBERT'S CURRENT TRIP. DABERNAT SAID JOBERT WAS SEEKING TO OFFER A FRENCH (PLUS COMMUNITY) ALTERNATIVE TO US PRE-DOMINANCE IN SAUDI ARABIA AND TO SOVIET PREDOMINANCE IN SYRIA. HE CONFIRMED THAT FRANCE WAS SEEKING A 20-YEAR OIL SUPPLY DEAL WITH SAUDIS IN RETURN FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT THOUGHT THAT THE 800 MILLION TON FIGURE REPORTED IN PRESS WAS IN EXCESS OF WHAT FRENCH REALISTICALLY THOUGHT THEY WOULD OBTAIN. ACCORDING TO DABERNAT, THE REASON FOR DELAY IN SIGNING THIS AGREEMENT UNTIL-AS REPORTED IN PRESS -- POSSIBLY LATE MARCH, WAS IMPLY THAT JOBERT HAD NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN GETTING FRENCH BUSINESS INTERESTS TO COME UP WITH A PACKAGE DEAL. JOBERT APPARENTLY IS DETERMINED TO PRESENT A UNIFIED FRENCH INDUSTRIAL PACKAGE A LA JAPONAISE, RATHER THAN INDUSTRY BY INDUSTRY OFFERS FROM A SERIES OF FRENCH COMPANIES. JOBERT IS REPORTEDLY DISMAYED THAT FRENCH BUSINESS IS NOT GEARED TO ORGANIZE COMPREHENSIVE OFFERS AND THAT QUAI IS NOT YET IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE FRENCH BUSINESS WITH NECESSARY STAFF SUPPORT.

4. SYRIA. IN SYRIA, JOBERT WILL APPRENTLY SEEK TO STIFFEN SYRIAN RESISTANCE TO SIGNING A FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION TREATY WITH THE SOVIETS. DABERNAT SAID FRENCH ARMS SALES WERE EXCLUDED, BUT THAT THE FRENCH WOULD OFFER GENEROUS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC AID IN AN ATTEMPT TO REESTABLISH FRENCH POSITION AS AN ATTRACTIVE OPTION TO TOTAL RELIANCE ON THE USSR. IN THIS CONNECTION, DABERNAT THOUGHT JOBERT WOULD SEEK MEANS OF RESOLVING SYRIAN DILEMMA OF ISRAELI POW LIST. PROBLEM IS DELICATE, SAID DABERNAT, BECAUSE APPROXIMATELY 30 PER CENT OF ISRAELI PRISONERS CAPTURED IN SYRIAN SECTOR HAD BEEN TAKEN AND
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SUMMARILY EXECUTED BY MOROCCAN AND IRAQI CONTINGENTS. THE OTHER APPROXIMATELY 70 PER CENT OF ISRAELI MIA'S TAKEN BY SYRIANS, SOME OF WHOM HAD BEEN WOUNDED AND/OR BADLY TREATED, WERE BEING CAREFULLY GUARDED BY SYRIAN AUTHORITIES. DABERNAT SAID INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS KNEW THE FACTS, BUT DID NOT DARE PUBLISH THEM.

5. FUTURE MID-EAST TRIPS. IN ADDITION TO SAUDI ARABIA,

KUWAIT AND SYRIA VISITED ON CURRENT TRIP, JOBERT TOLD DABERNAT THAT HE WOULD VISIT SIX OR SEVEN MORE MID-EAST COUNTRIES PRIOR TO JULY, AND THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT BE THE LAST COUNTRY VISITED. OTHER COUNTRIES INCLUDED ABU DHABI, EGYPT, IRAQ, LEBANON AND LIBYA. ALTHOUGH DECISION TO VISIT ISRAEL HAD BEEN TAKEN IN PRINCIPLE BY FRENCH AUTHORITIES -- AND WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS WERE ALREADY MAKING ADVANCE PREPARATIONS -- DABERNAT ADMITTED THAT FRENCH AND ISRAELIS HAVE NOT YET AGREED ON JOBERT'S VISIT.

6. FRENCH/US RELATIONS IN MID-EAST CONTEXT. DABERNAT SAID JOBERT HAD TOLD HIM FRANCE DOES NOT WANT A CONFRONTATION WITH US OVER MID-EAST POLICY. THIS SAID, JOBERT FIRMLY DISAGREED WITH US APPROACH AND WILL DELAY DECIDING ON FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN THE WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE UNTIL LAST MOMENT. DABERNAT THOUGHT IT POSSIBLE THAT FRENCH MIGHT BE REPRESENTED BY STATE SECRETARY DE LIPKOWSKI AT FEBRUARY 11 CONFERENCE.

7. RUMORED VISIT TO PARIS IN MID-FEBRUARY BY GROMYKO. DABERNAT SPECULATED THAT THE RUMORED GROMYKO VISIT MIGHT OFFER JOBERT NEEDED ALIBI FOR NOT GOING TO THE WASHINGTON MEETING.
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